

REMARKS

Claims 1-30 have been rejected as indefinite with respect to the use of the phrases "encryption key data," "key encryption data" and "encryption data." The claims have been amended to use "encryption key data" throughout. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Section 112 rejections is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-30 stand rejected as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,592,556 (Schwed) in view of newly cited U.S. Patent No. 5,224,166 (Hartman Jr.). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Neither Schwed nor Hartman Jr., alone or in combination disclose or suggest the claimed invention. For example neither reference discloses or suggests:

a non-volatile RAM for containing a BIOS for controlling digital output formatting having a specific write-protectable area allocated for storing an encryption key flag at a flag address and encryption key data;

as defined by claim 1, nor do those references disclose or suggest:

said specific write-protectable area being rendered read-only only when a predetermined flag value is stored at said flag address whereby encryption key data may be stored in said specific area of said non-volatile RAM in connection with storing said predetermined flag value at said flag address such that stored encryption data cannot be altered by a subsequent write operation to said non-volatile RAM.

The Examiner cites element 38 of Hartman, Jr. as disclosing the claimed non-volatile RAM. RAM 38 in Hartman, Jr. is not used to store encryption key data as claimed. Hartman Jr., col. 5, lns. 12-18 states that the encryption keys are stored in registers 32 and 34 of CPU chip 30, not RAM 38:

CPU chip 30 contains two programmable read-only memory (ROM) registers, one register 32 containing a decrypted form of a public key 12 and one register 34 for containing a decrypted form of the processor's private key 14. Both registers are programmed by the manufacturer or by the first seller and once programmed may not be altered. ....

Hartman, Jr. does not suggest or disclose a RAM "having a specific write-protectable area allocated for storing an encryption key flag at a flag address and encryption key data" as claimed.

The "key instruction" 64, 66 that are used in connection with RAM 38 of Hartman, Jr. have nothing to do with the ability to render as read-only a memory area where encryption keys are stored as defined by the last element of claim 1. There is no disclosure of storing encryption key data in a "specific write-protectable area" that contains a "flag address" which controls whether or not the area is read only. The references do not disclose such "specific write-protectable area" that is rendered "read-only only when a

predetermined flag value is stored at said flag address" as set forth in the independent claims.

Until there is a predetermined flag value stored at the flag address, the "specific write-protectable area" remains available for encryption configuration, thereafter it is secured as read-only. Such a feature is not disclosed or suggested in the cited references.

In Hartman Jr. the key flag 60, for example, is merely used as an indicator of whether received media data is encrypted or not:

....If the information is encrypted, bus interface 36 knows that fact by virtue of the state of the flag in memory segment field 60. Assuming that the data segment is encrypted, bus interface 36 calls for the de-encrypted media master key in field 62 of segment register 56 associated with the recalled address. That media master key is then employed by encryption/decryption module 54 to decrypt the incoming information, with the decrypted information then being placed in either data cache 52 or instruction cache 50, as the case may be.

By contrast, if bus interface 36 receives non-encrypted data from RAM 38, the lack of a set flag in field 60 in the associated segment register 56 indicates that the arriving information is non-encrypted. In such case, bus interface 36 passes the requested data to the respective cache memory without alteration.

Hartman, Jr., col 7, lns. 6-22. (Emphasis added)

None of the key flags of Hartman, Jr. have anything to do with rendering a portion of a RAM as read-only as claimed.

With respect to claims 13-24, those claims are specifically directed to a video interface. The Examiner cites column 5 lines 1-43 of Schwed for disclosing an output port for a "digital video signal." There is no such disclosure. Schwed makes no reference to video interfaces and the word video does not even appear in the Schwed patent.

As explained in the application on page 5, line 23 et seq., there may be more than one "predetermined flag value" that renders the "specific write-protectable area" as read-only. In the example, both "H" and "h" values can be used as a flag value to make the area read only.

This feature is addressed in, for example, dependent claim 3 which defines first and second predetermined flag values. Note that per claim 3, one predetermined flag value enables a particular encryption and the other predetermined flag value disables encryption altogether. In either case, the "specific write-protectable area" becomes read-only when one of the predetermined flag values is stored at the key flag address within the "specific write-protectable area."

Claims 4, 12, 16 and 24 cover the case where a "specific value" is initially stored at the key flag address within the "specific write-protectable area." to render that area "write enabled." Once any other value is stored at the key flag address, the "specific write-protectable area" becomes read-only


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per the limitations of claims 4, 12, 16 and 24. Neither Schwed nor Hartman, Jr. disclose or suggest control of a "specific write-protectable area" through the use of a key flag address within the area itself.

For the above reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the presently claimed invention is patentable over the prior art. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested. If the claims are not presently allowed, a telephonic interview is requested in advance of issuing any further adverse action.

Respectfully submitted,

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